

janata

Vol. 72 No. 12
April 9, 2017

**Role of Education in Preventing
Violence and Promoting Peace
and Welfare***
Ravi P Bhatia

**The Future of the
European Union**
D K Giri

Kashmir: Finding Solutions
Pannalal Surana

**The Defeat in UP: Listening
to GGP**

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

If Any Thing is to Be Banned It Should Be Private Schools And Hospitals

Sandeep Pandey

Among the first decisions of the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh was to ban abattoirs and form anti-Romeo squads. First it was said that all slaughterhouses will be closed but later the government retracted and it was clarified that only illegally operating ones will be closed. But the atmosphere created due to this arbitrary order was that even ordinary meat shops were closed. This included other kind of meat as well – mutton, chicken, etc. A large number of people working in the meat industry were suddenly out of a job. The daily wagers were hit most badly. In the name of anti-Romeo operations even genuine couples were harassed. Government's interference in private lives of citizens has created a mood of despondency in the state. Worst is that the effect is spreading to other Bhartiya Janata Party ruled states. In Gujarat now, cow slaughter could attract life imprisonment.

After the ascendancy of Hindutva politics a new trend has set in. Even though there are

already existing laws concerning cow slaughter, the fact being that in the name of banning beef most businesses which are being targeted deal with buffalo meat. Or in the guise of preventing harassment of women on the street, vigilante groups have surfaced which are more than willing to take law into their own hands, sometimes with fatal results. No other mainstream political party in India has cadres of this nature. Maoists or Naxalites exist but most are associated with banned organisations. A peculiar situation has been created in which people suspected of having consumed beef or expressing love in public could be beaten up but the people openly instigating violence could go scot free. The Chief Minister of UP has himself been involved in provoking violence in the past by his inflammatory speeches.

BJP government has been successful in deflecting attention from far more pressing concerns. For example, lately farmers' suicide has become a phenomenon in UP.

BJP's prominent election promise was to waive loans taken by farmers. But obviously it is not considered a priority issue. Is it because this issue would not result in any communal polarisation advantage? The actions of BJP government and the party are fast polarizing the communal divide throughout the country. This was probably the objective of making Yogi the Chief Minister. The politics of ban suits right wing parties like BJP and Shiv Sena because it has immediate polarisation effects.

However, if the BJP governments want to indulge in ban politics, like they demonstrated by banning big denomination old notes and now slaughterhouses, they should choose to ban private schools and hospitals which have become a curse for their supporters. The ban on alcohol in Bihar and other places has helped the poor but a ban on private education and health care institutions would be beneficial for all.

Rich parents are harassed because of high fee charging institutions where their children study which are ever-ready to extract more money in the name of one activity or the other. The schools don't follow the government prescribed norms when raising fees for the subsequent academic years. The children have to study in extremely competitive set ups which distort their personalities. Private coaching institutions have aggravated the problem. They are responsible for serious damage to the emotional well being of our children and youth. In spite of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 in place the expensive private schools are averse to admitting children from weaker sections and

disadvantaged groups under section 12(1)(c) of the Act and thereby are guilty of violation of law. The City Montessori School of Lucknow, which educates more than 50,000 children in its over 20 branches, brazenly refused admission to 58 children in 2016-17, whose admissions was ordered by the district level education officer, and remained unscathed. The very high fee charging private schools have become more powerful than the district or sometimes even state level officials and operate like mafia. Like all powerful businessmen they know how to influence the governments.

Private hospitals have flourished like private schools but have discarded the notion of medical practice being a service to humankind. Most of them are money making enterprises which are not guided by moral principles. Patients are burdened with unnecessary tests, medicines and treatment of inferior quality with no guarantee for cure. The patient could be held captive until the bills are cleared. There is a nexus of hospitals, ambulance services and middlemen which land unsuspecting patients in the hands of people who are zealous to fleece their clients. The government hospitals on the other hand may appear inefficient and unhygienic but still offer more genuine and honest services when compared with their private counterparts.

Why has the state adopted a policy of throwing common people to vultures in these two fields. After all, education and health care, are basic needs of human beings along with food, clothing and housing, which guarantee them a life of dignity. The deliberate deterioration

in quality of government schools which has been allowed has been lamented by Justice Sudhir Agarwal of Allahabad High Court in his August, 2015 order in which he asked the UP government to make it compulsory for all receiving government salaries to send their children to government schools.

People are waiting for emancipation from the clutches of private education, including coaching, and health care institutions bent upon exploiting them. BJP governments would do some good if they are able to bring a ban on them into effect and nationalise all education and health care services.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque

on

Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,

Mumbai 400 007

Role of Education in Preventing Violence and Promoting Peace and Welfare*

Ravi P Bhatia

Most societies are burdened with socio-political inequalities, class, racial, religious disparities, gender discrimination, and the urban and rural divide, that lead to violence and conflict in society. Unless these structures are done away with, there is little likelihood of a peaceful, nonviolent society. While the state needs to reduce if not eliminate these inequalities through relevant laws, policies and programmes, the role of education is also essential.

Governments and scholars now agree that education is a desirable objective in itself and is also the means for inculcating right attitudes and morality among people. It is also essential for the material development of society by reducing poverty and want. It helps to empower people especially the downtrodden ones. Countries with high achievement levels in the field of education also have high indices in other areas like food availability, health, longevity, and general welfare. It contributes to reducing infant mortality rates and curbing population growth.

We also know that education helps us in understanding developmental issues and transformation of society into a more just, peaceful, and equitable one. It also helps us in understanding and analysing concepts of violence and peace. A proper and relevant educational system helps to foster awareness of the society – both human and the environment, which

leads us to cultivate a healthy value system of living together in harmony and treating others with respect and dignity. It also helps to develop a proper attitude including the right to life of others and non-killing of infants or of rejecting foeticide.

Can education help us to avoid or reduce conflict and promote peace? It is an uphill task, but not an impossible one to redesign educational objectives to highlight the evils of violence and offer non-violent means to avoid conflict and violence.

Before delineating this aspect, let us briefly recapitulate some principal objectives of education. According to scholars, some principal ones are:

- Empowerment of people and society
- All round development of the child
- Overcoming ignorance and prejudice
- Generation of skills, knowledge and technology
- Development of values, social norms of living in harmony with mankind and nature
- Development of the society – including production, creating wealth and improving the wellbeing of people, reducing social, economic, educational, and other inequities

- Providing employment opportunities
- Answering philosophical questions such as the place of man in the world, the future of mankind, the role of religion and peace.

Many of these aspects are covered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) in Article 26 which outlines the role and benefits of education for the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and freedom. Article 26(1) reiterates the right of everyone to free education at the elementary stage. Article 26 (2) covers the basic objectives of education which are outlined below:

Education should be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

More than 90 years ago, Gandhi propagated simple and far-reaching objectives in his concept of *NaiTaleem* (New Education Policy). He felt that a proper education system would help in creating right attitudes of love, truth and non-violence. He spoke of education for both boys and girls, for urban and

(Continued on Page 15)

The Future of the European Union

D K Giri

After Britain voted to exit, the European Union, the most successful regional integration in the world has apparently plunged into a survival-crisis. Many Europe watchers are predicting its disintegration, nationalism bouncing back, euro-scepticism and growing populism, and retreat of progressive pro-European Union forces. The leadership in the EU is pulling out all the stops to absorb the shock of Britain's exit, revive and strengthen Europe. In these efforts, the leadership is attempting to restructure the Union, in order to minimise discontent and the possibility of further disintegration.

On Wednesday, March 1, 2017, European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker presented his 'white paper' on the future of Europe to the European Parliament in Brussels. He presented five scenarios on how European Union could evolve in the coming years. The idea is to start a democratic debate over the shape of Europe that should be built in the coming years. The second idea behind the white paper is that, by the next European Parliament elections in 2019, European citizens will have a chance to choose and vote for their preferred choice of the shape and size of European Union. The five scenarios are; (i) 'carrying on', (ii) 'nothing but the single market', (iii) 'those, who want more, do more', (iv) 'doing less more efficiently'. The underlying strategy in all the five scenarios is seen to be, carrying out the balancing act facing

European Union, which is, reconciling those considering European Union too distant with those believing it to be too interfering.

The first scenario is 'carrying on', which means EU's 27 members minus Britain carrying on its business as usual, without making many changes. The downside of such an approach is that 'the collective will' of all the members may not be revived; the decision-making process will remain unwieldy, not speedy as it is at the moment. The unity of 27 may be preserved, but they will have to revive and strengthen the collective resolve to deliver on the key issues-immigration, back-stopping the euro, common security and defence policy etc.

European Union becomes 'nothing but a single market' is the second scenario proposed. This would call for dropping at EU level the divisive issues like migration, common defence policies; negotiations on such issues could be bilateral, and EU reduces its regulatory role. This would also mean strengthening the mechanisms of free movement of goods and capital, but making it tougher on free movement of people etc. This scenario makes the decision-making simpler and faster but undermines the political ambition of the EU project. It has been long held by the EU champions that economic union will not be viable without a political union.

The third scenario suggests, 'those who want more do more'. This scenario creates 'one more coalition within' EU of the willing to do more on areas like defence, internal security, taxation, and social policy. Other members outside such a coalition can opt out for the time and return to it at a later time. Choosing such a scenario will enable EU to have a robust defence policy to undertake international military commitments as well as a stronger intelligence co-operation. This is not a new approach, as a two-speed Europe has been a policy in the past, but it may help, as those countries wanting to move forward in deeper integration, may be able to close the gap between their citizens' expectations and delivery.

'Doing less more efficiently' is the fourth strategy for EU to move forward. This approach entails EU to decide on its 'wish list' carefully. It will have to narrow down its priorities and do what it does best. Consequently, EU actions will be swifter and more impactful. Juncker gave some example on this proposal, one of which was the recent diesel emission standards introduced by EU. By 2025, EU could support more projects on 'digitisation and decarbonisation'; in other words, more green projects and more digital integration. The EU can then back out from other areas like employment, social policy and public health. Only hitch in this strategy is to arrive at a consensus in setting the priorities, as the member states often disagree on where to start.

The last scenario is ‘doing much more together’. In line with this strategy, EU realises that half-cooked measures do not work and any dilution of the EU collective authority, withdrawing to bilateralism or nationalism will not meet the current challenges posed by the globalised world. EU must deepen the integration, secure a seat in the international community, speak in one voice in aid, trade and defence of human rights and security, EU defence union should work with NATO and so on. It calls for reiterating and refreshing the integration process, not deviating from it in any way. The risk in this strategy is just one, how to allay the apprehension that EU lacks legitimacy and takes powers away from the national governments.

Although only small majority of Britons decided to leave EU, the Brexit has rattled the EU leadership. In the referendum held in Britain on 23 June 2016, 51.9 per cent voted to leave against 48.1 per cent remain voters. The difference was just 3 per cent of 72.2 per cent people voting. The future of EU will depend on the inclination of the big countries like France and Germany, the detente between these two countries had created the EU process in 1952. Germany has been pro-EU from the beginning, pays the biggest share to the EU budget, France has provided the political and institutional tools to move the integration process forward. Interestingly, both the countries are facing elections this year, France in April and May (first and second round) and Germany in September. In Germany, both the contestants are strong Europeans, Angela Merkel, the incumbent

chancellor has been in the driving seat of EU, and her challenger Martin Shultz was the president of European Parliament for 5 years from 2012 to 2017. He has been a member of European Parliament much longer, for over two decades since 1994. He is and has to be pro-European Union. In France, the far-right National Front candidate Marine Le Pen who is most likely to get past the first round is strongly anti-European, promises a referendum on France’s EU membership. Her main planks are; to reduce migration, reinstating border controls, ditching the Euro for a national currency. Her nationalist populist politics puts her in direct opposition to Emmanuel Macron, a centrist, independent candidate. He is fiercely international and pro-European. He has sparked an unprecedented political trend in France. He has launched a movement, not a party. He served as a finance minister in outgoing government of Francois Hollande. He aims to rally the middle-ground with a vision of an outward looking France freed from the stifling orthodoxies of both left and right. He is a trifle behind Marie Le Pen, but by all calculations, he would win in the 2nd round and become the president of France. That is good news for European Union.

Political Commentators have mixed reactions to these proposals to chalk out the future course of European Union. Some are critical of the uncertainly displayed by the Commission. This white paper lacks the courage, the strength and the vision of the white paper on ‘Growth, Competitiveness and Employment’ presented by Jacques Delors in 1993. The paper

makes no real commitment to pave the way forward. It has regrettably not provided a clear political vision for Europe. Many others would support it. Mujtaba Rahman, head of Europe practical at the Eurasian Group, a risk consultancy said, “This is the most interesting analytical and political exercise the Commission has undertaken for quite some time”. He added “for the first time, Brussels is asking the EU member states to decide the direction of travel, not imposing their own agenda. If, this portends a new approach, it will undermine the narrative in capitals of the member states that Brussels is undermining national sovereignty”.

It is hard to envisage that member states will dismantle the integration embedded in EU. If anything they do, they will work towards an ‘even closer’ Union envisaged in the Treaty of Rome. Therefore, a number of commentators are gravitating towards a sixth scenario-that is left out by Junker’s paper, ‘a democratic and supranational government that can steer EU policies towards solidarity, green jobs, energy efficiency, and combating climate change, social justice, etc. The challenge however is to involve the governments, civil societies and economic actors, As European Commission is accused of democratic deficit, the European Parliament should play a bigger role to provide the necessary space for an open debate and choices on the future of Europe.

Janata
is available at
www.janataweekly.org

Kashmir: Finding Solutions

Pannalal Surana

One late evening in August 1947, Gurcharan Singh Bhatia, then a boy of 14, even though he was terrified by the orgy of violence in the nearby Muslim mohallah, looked at three corpses about twenty feet away, and suspected two of those eyes were twinkling. He walked through the bodies towards those eyes. On reaching there, he found a little child. He lifted the infant, carefully retraced his steps and reached home. On his knocking, his mother opened the door, and on seeing her son carrying an infant, immediately lifted the baby and started tending her. Gurcharan hesitatingly went to his friends Balraj Puri and Ved Bhasin and the trio visited a few Muslim acquaintances. One family agreed to shelter the baby. On their way back, a frenzied mob passed them by. When calm returned, the trio delivered the baby to that family. On way back, a few miscreants angrily enquired what they were ferrying from one place to another at such a late hour. By concocting a probable alibi, they could fob them off.

In those days, only a few boys like Ved Bhasin could keep their heads cool and act courageously.

Throughout his long life, Ved Bhasin exhibited those sterling qualities on many an occasion while running Kashmir Times for years together. Along with Jagdish Tirodkar, a Goa freedom fighter, I visited a few friends at Rajouri and Jammu in the last week of March. We had a fairly long conversation with Prabodh Jamwal, Editor of Kashmir

Times. I asked when we have deployed about four lakh army men and other security forces on the LoC and adjoining IB, yet how is it a few terrorists can succeed in entering our territory? Prabodh explained that it is only a small portion of northern border of Jammu which can be used for coming and going to PoK or the Pakistani area. All other sections of the border a distance away on the western front and remaining border on eastern side from Kargil have freezing temperatures around 0 degrees. Inhabitants on both sides of the border may have relatives or even their farms on the other. It is anybody's guess that about 4-5,000 persons might be crossing the border daily. So the sentries might be finding it difficult to identify terrorists, or smugglers and/or other undesirable elements. Erecting impenetrable fences is perhaps not possible.

Prabodh presented me a copy of their recent publication, "Vedji and his times" Vol 1. The volume contains material which gives a fair idea about the personality and thoughts of Ved Bhasin. While going through the book, I found his assertion that the Government has committed the mistake of not ascertaining the wishes of the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) which it had agreed to while accepting the Instrument of Accession by the then ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh. This statement is found to be repeated in his writings as also in Prabodh's conversation that day.

I wonder how journalists like Vedji

and Prabodh as also leaders of JKLF and Hurriyat prefer to lay all the blame at the doors of GoI. If they want to trace the genesis of the Kashmir Problem objectively, should not they enumerate mistakes committed by Hari Singh and also of the rulers of Pakistan? Should not the then ruler be held chiefly responsible? Why did he keep both Pakistan and India guessing about whether that State would merge that side or this? From 14th August to October, 1947, if he was toying with the idea of Independent Sovereign State', then why did he ask for military help from India when Pakistan invaded Kashmir on that year.

All these people prefer to say that the Instrument of Accession was limited to only three subjects of Defense, Foreign Affairs and Communications. But how can they hold only India responsible for not holding plebiscite when it is an established fact that Pakistan refuses to withdraw their military from the territory of J&K as it was on that year Even the UN has acknowledged that fact.

As everybody knows, with the concurrence of the Vidhan Sabha of J&K, elections have been held for the state Assembly and also Lok Sabha and elected representatives of the Kashmir people have been participating in the functioning of those bodies. It is being repeatedly alleged that the elections were rigged. All over the world, it is acknowledged that the elections held by the Election

Commission of India have been, by and large, free and fair. In the fifties and sixties, malpractices like booth capturing, casting of bogus votes, etc, were operative on a significant scale. However, thanks to enhanced mass vigilance and participation, together with tightening of the security arrangements, elections have become increasingly much more transparent. In a number of cases, the voters had removed the incumbent rulers from the seats of power. Taking all these things into consideration, there is no point in hurling the adjective “rigged”. Kashmiri people have taken initiative in launching political parties having independent set of policies.

Taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by genuine democratic Constitution, there is vibrant pluralism in the politics of J&K as also in other States. Thanks to spread of education, wider recruitment to the Got, services equally widespread expansion of media, etc, ideological bonds of Kashmiri people with Indian citizenry in other parts of the country are getting strengthened day-by-day.

Like Vedji, many public personalities are harping on the point of autonomy. I would like to urge all those friends to give due consideration to the provisions regarding federalism and, lately, the Panchayati Raj institutions. People have been given ample powers to regulate their affairs taking into consideration specific conditions of respective areas. Autonomy lies more in practicing that on the ground. There is no point in prolonging verbal polemics.

All citizens would do well if they concentrate more on advocating

policies that are required to address the pressing problems of the masses. Particular care should be taken that public peace and order is maintained so that common people can devote more time and energy to improve their earnings and engage in cultural pursuits.

J&K is a small State surrounded by big powers like China, Russia, and Pakistan. In these days of long-range missiles and easy deployment of lethal weapons, security can better

be obtained by remaining in a large country.

Compared with some of the neighbouring countries, India is far more inclusive, tolerant and liberal. Let all of us Indians join hands in making our country egalitarian and extend friendship towards all countries under the Sun to endeavor towards achieving the goal of One World Government. The Slogan of Jai Jagat, coined by the sage Vinoba Bhave, is a beacon for us all.

RESOLUTION

Socialist Party (India) Delhi State Convention

New Delhi, April 2, 2017

Delhi is the capital of the country. The centre of power and culture. Its National Capital Region (NCR) is a large base for several national and international multinational companies. But leaving a few privileged ones and their areas the civic life of this city is full of misery and deprivation. Murders, robberies, skirmishes and riots, assaults on women's modesty happen here routinely in broad daylight. Even new cyber crimes along with other crimes have become commonplace in Delhi and NCR. Lower and lower middle classes continually grapples with unemployment and inflation. Lakhs of children, women and elderly beg at intersections and sleep on the streets. Lakhs of children are servants in affluent homes or eateries. In villages, resettlement colonies, JJ colonies and older areas of the city, there is a perpetual deprivation of civic amenities like toilets, roads, parks, sewer connection etc. There is no stopping the privatisation of essential services like electricity, water, health and education at the hands of

profiteering companies in the country's capital. Instead of building schools, training institutes, colleges, universities or research institutes, the government is busy gifting away the land acquired from farmers at a pittance, to the corporate houses, the uber rich and the builders to open luxury hotels, mega malls, farm houses, resort hospitals, bars and casinos. In pursuit of capitalist development, Delhi has become one of the most polluted city in the entire world. A lot of epidemics are unleashed due to pollution and every year thousands of people lose their lives and lakhs of them lose their health. Both the rich and the poor are affected.

Aam Admi Party which accused the Congress of corruption to come to power has a deeply corrupt administration. No work happens in any department without bribes. In the Kejriwal government, which has been an open votary of capitalism, the wealthy and the brokers are rolling in money while the general public is in deep distress. The

current Delhi government has emulated the Modi government at the centre in burning away millions of rupees of hard earned taxpayer's money in the name of building the luminous image of their leader and the party. The Chief Minister Arving Kejriwal and the deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia seem to be vying with each other for the more expensive hoardings and posters with their photos. Kejriwal, who claimed to live simply and honestly in the days of the anti-corruption movement, lives like royalty as Chief Minister. In a small state like Delhi, there is a Deputy CM, who lives with full fanfare in the residence of the previous CM, Sheila Dikshit. Both these characters have come from the NGO world and are running the government according to the those very principles. That is, the ruse of fooling the poor to protect profiteering capitalism. Most of the country's progressive civil society and its leaders favour this party, which aspires to be the B team of BJP. The Socialist Party believes that this is a serious challenge for the politics of constitutionally warranted equality and freedom.

Through this convention the Socialist Party (India) Delhi State, issues the following demands on behalf of the working class of Delhi:

1. In every part and section of Delhi, the freedom and respect of women must be ensured.
2. The needs of the elderly, people with disability and children must receive utmost care and attention.
3. Keeping in mind the new challenges of life in the capital, creative policy for the youth and children must be undertaken.

4. Privatization of electricity, water and health services in Delhi must stop.
5. Privatization of education must stop. The existing private schools, colleges and universities must be nationalised/ socialised.
6. The government must fulfill its constitutional duty to provide equal, free, quality education in the mother tongue.
7. In all the schools at all levels, and in colleges and university departments, vacant positions must be filled right away.
8. Privatization of electricity, water and health services must stop. Private hospitals must be nationalized/ socialized.
9. In all government departments, the vacant positions of class three and four employees must be filled immediately. In order that people's problems get resolved quickly, more positions must be generated in departments. Contractual system must end.
10. In the villages of Delhi, services such as housing, roads, electricity, water, libraries, women centers, child centers, health centers, parks, community centers, schools, colleges, vocational institutes etc., must be made available as per the requirements of all the citizens. Apart from farmers, craftsmen families who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, must also be given residential plots.
11. Unauthorized colonies must be authorized with all civic amenities.
12. Families living in JJ colonies for long must be given residential flats at one go.
13. Citizens willing to be self-employed must be given permission and facilities to run small cottage industries on a priority basis.
14. Street vendors must not need to pay committees and police any kind of bribe, there must be a permanent resolution to this.
15. Unauthorized colonies must be given comprehensive civic amenities and regularized.
16. It must be ensured that all the traffic signals in the city function properly everyday.

Thus stands the Socialist Party Upholding brotherhood and equality Socialist Party (India) Delhi State.

Books by Surendra Mohan

1. **Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan..** Price 600 rupees.
2. **Samajwad, Dharma Nirapekshata aur Samajik Nyaya** Reissued as second edition; Price 500 rupees
- Published by Rajkamal Prakashan, 2a Netaji Subhash Road, New Delhi 11002
3. **Vartaman Rajneeti ki Jwalant Chunaotiyan.** Price 400 rupees.
4. **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ki Neetiyon:** (This booklet was published late last year.) Price 25 rupees.

Published by Anamika Publishers and Distributors. Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002

The Defeat in UP: Listening to GGP

D K Giri

I was thrilled to read the 'Notebook' on the Defeat in UP written by GG, (*Janata*, March 26, 2017). He really outlined a manifesto for the socialists in India. I cannot resist my urge to engage with it, using my privilege of knowing GG like many fellow-socialists do, for over four decades, and my predilection for his thoughts.

GG says the defeat of Samajwadi Party in UP is a defeat of all socialists in India. It is entirely true, in public perception, although some socialists may not agree for the reasons GG gives. The second major point GG makes is, socialists should not fight BJP under the banner of secularism. I am so delighted he says that. It is proved time and again, in recent times, that secularism is no longer a viable platform. GG says it is a trap laid by RSS-BJP. I am afraid; RSS manipulation of the concept is part of the problem. Some of us have been arguing for so long that secularism is a failed concept. It is confusing and controversial. The Congress Party did not clearly say or did what secularism meant. The Communists did not do any better. The overused and the platitudinous phrase mouthed by Congress and Communists has not resonated with the people for a long time. They included everyone except BJP in to the secular and democratic fold - the Muslim League, the Alkalis, the anti-Brahmin Dravidians, many caste based parties. How credible was that? It was feeding fodder to the BJP. Anyway, secularism should be replaced by pluralism, which celebrates diversities, differences, is

not ambivalent on religion or culture, and protects minorities of all kinds not merely religious.

Bread and Butter issues as GG suggests should be the main plank of socialists, they always have been, at least, in their declarations. But socialists have not focused on them as their core issues for implementation. I like it when GG implores. "Socialists will have to identify these issues and concentrate on them and fight till the end to solve them". (The emphasis is mine). He picks, and rightly so, education and health, as two key areas. He advocates, "Free, compulsory and equal education of quality for all". GG adds, "When the children of rich and poor study together, the quality of education will not deteriorate". Here we run the risk of reviving the communist system of leveling down the people and killing competition and innovation. What will work even in a competitive unequal education system is that the children of politicians and bureaucrats should all go to government schools where the children of the poor go. Do not the government servants travel only in Air India when they use government money like LTC etc? They cannot send their children into elite private schools. Then the government schools will improve for sure.

Health should not be handed over to private sector, argues GG. We agree. But the state sector except in a few areas is bureaucratic, corrupt and inefficient. That goes for health as well. But shall we not encourage private initiative which is

not exploitative and profiteering? The problem in our country is what late Prof Raj Krishna used to say, the nexus between Neta (leaders), Babu (bureaucrats) and Lala (businessmen). The state colluded with the business in profit making, did not monitor them or checked their rapacity. The state has to be smart and strong. Moreover, if the Trusts, Foundations, Charities, and CSOs that are involved in health sector, are given a greater role, they would do a good job.

Decent work for all should be a top priority. No doubt about that. Working conditions, rights of the workers, minimum wages, social security etc go with decent work culture, policy and practice. GG has been critical of jobless growth. He maintains that the current economic system does not generate jobs. He is right. But, with phenomenal growth in technology, digitization of economy, more jobs will be cut. So can we think of delinking income from jobs? A socialist professor of economics in the JNU is working on it. People may not be a part of the production process, but they cannot be deprived of the income generated by the country and so on.

GG refers to the obscene inequality that exists leading to gross social injustice. The ratio of 1:10 in income between poor and the rich proposed during the freedom movement is a brilliant idea for the sake of justice. That must be revived by the socialists in order to narrow the huge gap between the rich and the poor. One can earn as much as

s(he) can, but retain only 10 times more than the poor and part with the rest in taxes and charities etc.

The next point GG talks about restoration of the Planning Commission. Scholars and historians suggest that Nehru borrowed 'democracy' from the West and 'planning' from the Soviets. The Soviet planning model has been discredited as it concentrated powers at the top. The so-called bottom-up planning did not work in India. All the planning was done by PM, FM and the deputy chairman of the planning commission, often handpicked by the PM. Now the planning commission stands dismantled. In its place, the new body is NITI Ayog. Few people understand what it stands for and what it does. Yes, we should revive planning, but a process which is decentralized, and involves multiple stake holders -state, market institutions, think-tanks, research organizations and so on.

GG's point on housing is similar to provisions of health and education. My submission is that it should again involve multi-stakeholders not only the state. The low-cost houses made

after tsunami by non-state actors were as good or better than what the state did. Our attention is aptly drawn by GG to the plight of farmers. He is so right. And his advice that socialists should visit farmers and spend time with them should be so well taken. Recalling the spirit of freedom fighters in so doing to the farmers is really inspiring.

His last points on unity of socialists, the character the cadres and leadership should embrace, corruption, and value bankruptcy of Congress party, nepotism of Samajwadi Party are great advice and they must be reflected upon by all socialists. He also laments the splits in socialist organizations and parties that have weakened us and it is only cohesion and unity that can save the socialists politically. One could not agree more to this telling observation. However, it is not impossible to reunite socialists. To do so, what we need is not just personalities, but ideological and organizing principles. The unity efforts get stuck when it comes to choosing the leader of the new party or coalition. I had written in Janata more than once and elsewhere how to create an unbiased and transparent procedure to elect the

leader. We should never start the unity efforts by discussing and evaluating the leaders. We had Loknayak JP to unite socialists. Yet, he never held any position. We do not have a JP any more, at least, at present. So we have to rely on the process and not a personality who can tower over all the rest like JP did.

Finally, I must say, GG has been an institution-builder. His role in the civil society-led development and social entrepreneurship etc is greater than his party political activism. I wish he had brought in his own innovation, ingenuity, and experience of the civil society supporting, supplementing and even supplanting the state albeit in a limited way. He sounds a bit state-centric in his approach. I would agree with that if we are building a welfare state as Prof B Vivekanandan argues. In fact, he is coming out with his big book on welfare state development. If this is what GG has in mind, and to my understanding, he has, then we should all work for it. But the state at the moment is partisan, pro-business, corrupt, bureaucratic, and inaccessible. Can we change that to a welfare state? Yes we can.

Footprints of A Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by

Rohini Gawankar

Published by

Kamalakar Subhedar,

Secretary, Samata Shikshan Sanstha, Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village,

Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W), Mumbai 400072.

Mobile: 9820092255 / Contribution: Rs.300+

Book Review

Social Economy of Development in India, **by K S Chalam, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2017**

Ravela Somayya

Prof K S Chalam, well known contemporary thinker and academic has published a very thought provoking and relevant book for our times. He is one of our comrades who has been writing in the traditions of Lohia, Roy, Marx, Ambedkar for the last several decades, though he hails from the mainstream academic profession as a Professor of Economics,. He has been Vice-chancellor and held some important positions in Delhi. I am informing our readers about the book as we do not expect that the mainstream media to shed light on such writings as it brings out the need for unity among democratic and socialist forces to take on the evangelists.

Sismondi and Surplus Value

The book makes an attempt to bring to life Sismondi the Pre-Marxian scholar and original contributor of the concept of surplus value as a part of 'Social Economy' as study of the dynamics of socio-economic parameters in a traditionally fragmented society like India. He analyses that how the theory is re-emerging in the context of globalisation. He has clarified that it is not directly related to the study of civil society or third sector activities of advanced countries as expressed by some perverse scholars. It is much wider in its scope and content and is a unique approach to study a country like India. In fact, the third sector has never been autonomous and alleged to have

been used to side-track the radical upsurge against the ugly designs of corporate capitalism. Like the selling costs of a firm that drive customers towards its brand, civil society activities are suspected to be used by market players with a hidden economic agenda. (Our experience with different kinds of revolutions sponsored by some of the civil societies in Middle East and the result).It is necessary to dispel the vilification of Social Economics by neo-classical writers.

The Social economy expounded by pre-Marxian scholar Sismondi, developed by Tawny, Hobson and Schumacher and others is now being pursued to understand the tyranny of Neo-colonialism and its consequences. The echo of some of the issues pursued by the subject are found in Welfare Economics .Social Economics was concerned about the abuse of labour, of competition, on the excess of production etc as it declared a disbelief in laissez-faire. The ideas of the social economists are found their way in the discussions of scholars who are humanistic in their approach to development as against those whose ideas are responsible for devastation, degradation of ecology and human values.

Mainstream Economics has helped to solve problems of poverty, inequality, want and disease under certain assumptions of a class society. Indian economists including

B R Ambedkar, Rammanoha Lohia, Amartya Sen and a few others have used the concepts and found that the caste based economy and society need something more than what is given in the text books. They have partially succeeded to address the typical problems of caste. Some ideologues recognised the problem and equated it with class. However, it has not enhanced our understanding of the social economy of castes and even untouchability and discrimination. Market has not provided answers to this problem and alleged to have been a conduit to strengthen the already existing social inequalities in India. In this context, interrogating the liberal economic policies and their consequences in the area of social tensions, political process, inequalities in Human development, marginalisation of agriculture, language and culture and so on in a caste-based society like India is attempted in the book with an alternative paradigm of development based on Indian thinking in the subject.

The subject matter of Social Economy as a branch of Economics is considered here in the context of its relevance in the twenty first century. India, being a traditional society with unyielding castes and deep rooted family norms is different from the West. The journey of Economics from the time of classical period and to the present crisis is examined to indicate its limited application in a country like India.

Economic liberalisation in India has strengthened an already existing iniquitous society by converting modern corporations as fiefdoms of few families in a caste like structure, promoting crony capitalism, corruption, frauds making mockery of democratic institutions. The economic crisis in Europe is reflected in the Indian economy as it has sincerely adhered to neo-classical models of development based on Trade that grew to cover more than 100 per cent of GDP. It has destroyed MSME and traditional industries by relying on ICT and services that are accessible to advanced castes. This has further widened the social inequalities reducing urban areas as centres of perdition with automobile and environmental pollution.

Caste Mode

The reforms agenda with the nexus of entrenched classes in bureaucracy, politics, and business and contractor groups, all coming from upper castes have changed the caste-class narrative under globalisation. Caste has emerged as an important category to appropriate economic opportunities by few. This brings to focus the Caste Mode of Production in operation. The MoP has reduced education particularly Higher Education as a commodity inaccessible to traditionally poor and untouchable castes. Even the so called demographic dividend eulogised as unique to India is confined to few castes and geographical regions. The concept of Caste Mode of Production introduced by K S Chalam in the book for a debate is fresh in our academic scholarship as neither Marxists nor Anti-Brahmin socialites thought about it in a theoretical framework before.

Agriculture is the pivot of Indian economy and society from time immemorial. It is now given a tepid treatment through many of the neo-classical policy prescriptions. Major irrigation projects and dams are considered by the state to benefit the contractor class and green revolution is confined to few crops and areas. Though self-sufficiency is achieved in the production of food grains, it has not resulted in the food security of the vast majority who consume non-vegetarian protein food. The farmer is treated as a beneficiary and not a contributor to the economy. Prof Chalam has raised the issue of why the proportion of people depending upon agriculture in India has almost remained the same while its contribution to GDP is dwindling?

The political process in India in the name of democracy is made vibrant through the oligarchy of castes. The interconnection between liberalisation and traditional ruling castes has perpetuated the social inequalities with limited access to dalits and bahujans. The BSP experiment in the largest state of India, UP is ultimately reduced to the vanity of individuals and did not percolate down below. However, it has helped to bring the issue of caste and discrimination on the agenda of the nation for an inclusive society. Religion and caste have become important factors in the electoral politics as well as economic programmes with little benefit to the marginalised sections even in a corporate controlled state like Gujarat.

Human development as a combination of income, education and health is found to be unevenly developed across states and within the advanced states across castes. Adivasis continue to live as sub-

humans and the sexual assaults on women particularly dalit women seem to have increased with urban attractions after liberalisation. Culture as a super structure of the economic liberalisation has reinvigorated Religion, Caste, Language, Region and other social embargos strikingly with the support of caste and corporate media.

Indigenous Ideators

India is a unique country with several indigenous thinkers like Gandhi, J C Kumarappa, M N Roy, Ambedkar, Lohia and others. They have received western education and interpreted the democratic institutions within the given Indian parameters. Some of them radically opposed the social institutions and the undemocratic culture with alternative paradigms of their own as solutions to the distinct problems like caste, religion and inequality. Democratic socialism as against the social welfare programmes is considered as an important alternative as the policy makers are dishonest and corrupt without any accountability after liberalisation. Buddhist ideology of sharing and seeking refuge in society as a traditional value need to be re-examined in the context of emerging dichotomies of alienation in society. The framework of Human Rights with equality of opportunity and democratic decentralisation of power are envisaged as some possible answers to the predicaments of contemporary India. The author appealed to the left and democratic forces to understand the relevance of contributions of Eric Fromm who has pointed out the limitations of market either in capitalist or socialist economies as it is beyond the reach of our will and influence. He has enticed to the progressive forces to

understand the need for appealing to the senses of ordinary people about the primacy of 'common good', an idea that both social economists and socialists held very dear to their heart.

Contemporary thinkers and activists who are shocked by the emergence of reactionary and conservative forces in general and in India in particular would find some solutions in the book. It is farsighted of Prof Chalam who imagined the imminent threat of a market and religious fundamentalist rolled in one threatening the vitals of democracy in India. In the last chapter, he has proposed an alternative paradigm as Social economic approach as represented by our indigenous thinkers noted above. The subsection on Rammanohar Lohia and Left Unity contained some practical ideas. The author said the critics of Lohia, "particularly from the Left, used to call him as perhaps a petty bourgeois intellectual who was critical about Marx. Some of them might also think that his programme of action against supremacy and his short-tempered utterances against some communists were only passing remarks. But, four decades of experience both in India and in socialist countries have shown that he was to a large extent right in perceiving the problems of building socialism in India.... Some analysts indicate how the three types of Left with Marxist ideologies and people oriented struggles are all made irrelevant with the ideology of globalisation and PPP model with temporary solutions to the victims with small goodies.. The critics and admirers of Lohia should not hesitate to recognise that the limitations of Marx and Soviet model and even Chinese noted by Lohia do not exist anymore today to prolong the

criticism. Similarly, the Marxists who were critical about Lohia's approach to communism may consider the changed circumstances in the world and the relevance of the socialist programme advocated by Lohia, and the need for reassessment of the ideas to bring all the progressive forces on one platform to fight capitalism and its Siamese twin fundamentalism." I think this is the essence of the message that the book gives to all of us who are followers of Lohia, Ambedkar, J C kumarappa and several Indian

Marxists who wish to see the misery and poverty of the people should disappear as early as possible.

The content of the book broadly comes under Development Studies, Economics, Asian Studies and Culture. It is an emerging subject developed on the basis of 18th century scholarship with special reference to India. It has 10 chapters with excellent references and Bibliography at the end. One can finish the 400 pages book (hard bound) in one go as the style is lucid and simple.

Does the Banking System Really Want to Help Farmers?*

Devinder Sharma

The corporate sector is responsible for 70 per cent of the country's NPAs, but their loans are being waived off, while waiving farming loans is still being frowned upon.

The banking system seems to be designed in favour of the rich who benefit at the cost of farmers and the rural poor.

The Gujarat government gave a loan of Rs 558.58 crores to the Tatas to set up the Nano plant at Sanand, near Ahmedabad. The Gujarat government has acknowledged that the massive loan was given at an interest of 0.1 per cent to be paid back in 20 years. In other words, this huge loan was virtually an interest free long term loan. In another case, Steel tycoon, LaxmiNarain Mittal, was given Rs 1,200 crores by the Punjab government to invest in the Bathinda refinery. He also got the loan at a 0.1 per cent rate of interest.

On the other hand, if an extremely poor woman in a village wants to buy a goat worth Rs 5,000, she goes to a micro-finance institute (MFI), which provides her a loan at an interest rate of 24 to 36 per cent or even more. This paltry loan has to be returned at weekly intervals. This poor woman is also an entrepreneur and wants to sustain her livelihood rearing a goat, the milk of which she can sell. Millions of livelihoods can potentially be sustained if banks were to provide loans at an interest rate like the ones the Tatas and Mittal received, to poor entrepreneurs.

Farmers, for instance – suppose they buy a tractor at an interest rate of 12 per cent. Big entrepreneurs can buy a luxury car at an interest rate of 7 per cent. For a farmer, a tractor is necessary to improve crop production, which directly contributes to an increase in his income. The role of mechanisation to improve farming

has never been in question, but for the rich, luxury cars are more of a status symbol.

Therefore why is the banking system designed to favour the rich who already have many perks, while the poor pay a higher price to sustain their livelihoods?

Discrimination against the poor doesn't end here. The Public Accounts Committee of the parliament has estimated that the total outstanding loans of public sector banks – Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) – stands at Rs 6.8 lakh crores. Out of this, 70 per cent belongs to the corporate sector, whereas only 1 per cent of the defaulters are farmers. The chief economic advisor, Arvind Subramanian, has already stated that the bad debts for the corporate sector should be written-off. According to him, the capitalist economy is designed so that the bad loans of these corporates have to be waived. India Ratings has estimated that more than Rs 4 lakh crore of the NPAs will be written-off. Writing-off of such enormous amounts of bad loans for the corporate sector makes economic sense, if the chief economic advisor is to be believed. On the other hand, the chairperson of State Bank of India, Arundhati Bhattacharya, laments that writing-off the outstanding loans of farmers is bad economics – it will lead to credit indiscipline. This when of the total NPAs, farmers were responsible for only 1 per cent!

Much of the farm credit that is provided every year is also taken advantage of by the agribusiness companies. In the Budget 2017, finance minister Arun Jaitley had

announced a farm credit of Rs 10-lakh crore. But while such a huge outlay for farm credit gives an impression of governmental concern about farmers, a study by Ram Kumar and Pallavi Chavan (from Tata Institute of Social Sciences) found that less than 8 per cent of this actually goes to small farmers. And small farmers constitute roughly 83 per cent of the entire farming community. Nearly 75 per cent of the Rs 10-lakh crore farm credit is reaped by agribusiness companies and big farmers who get the advantage of 3 per cent interest subvention. Over the years, the definition of what constitutes a farm loan has been expanded to include warehousing companies, farm implement manufacturers and other agribusiness companies.

It is primarily because of the bank's indifference towards the farmers that the election promise of writing-off of farmers' loans in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have become such a contentious issue. Since prime minister Narendra Modi had promised to waive off farmers loans in UP, the ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare has already announced that the Centre will take care of the financial burden of waiving farm loans in UP. Whereas in Punjab, where Congress has formed the government, state finance minister Manpreet Badal, has come out with an innovative way to bear the burden of farm loan waiver. He says the state will 'takeover' the farmers outstanding loans, and work out a long-term agreement with the banks under which the state government will repay the farmer's dues.

In Punjab, an estimated Rs 35,000 crore of bank loans were defaulted on by farmers. In Uttar Pradesh, the total amount that needs to be waived for farmers owning less than 2 hectares of land stands at Rs 36,000 crores. While the Centre has agreed to reimburse the UP government for the farm waiver, the question is, what about the other states? Maharashtra, for instance, is demanding Rs 30,500 crore for a loan waiver. Chief minister Devendra Fadnis has told the Maharashtra assembly that 23,000 farmers have killed themselves since 2009. In Tamil Nadu, which faces drought for the third year in a row, the state government has already declared a drought. Farmers are demanding a compensation package of Rs 25,000 per acre. Meanwhile, farmer suicides have been on the rise in Orissa and the Northeast, where they have nearly quadrupled over the past few years.

What needs to be seriously considered is that a terrible agrarian crisis is being allowed to prevail, primarily because of systemic efforts to keep farmers impoverished. By denying farmers the right price for their produce, the credit policy too is designed wrongly so that it benefits the rich at the cost of farmers and the rural poor. But will the banks accept their fault and redesign the credit policies? The rich corporates will continue to get tax incentives and massive subsidies in the name of incentives for growth.

*This article first appeared in The Wire. <https://thewire.in/119889/banking-system-farmers-loans>

(Continued from Page 3)

rural children. His concept of education stressed the integration of 'the world of knowledge' with 'the world of work,' a concept we are familiar with in today's language as vocational and relevant education for all. He felt that this was essential for the poor of India who would not only get some basic knowledge but also acquire useful skills to be utilised throughout life. These skills in Gandhi's time included weaving, pottery, stitching, carpentry and the like, but in today's time would also include repair of electronic devices, maintenance of tractors, cars, bicycles, first aid, nursing, computer and entrepreneur skills and the like. Some of these would be more relevant for men and others for women.

The fundamental premise of the *NaiTaleem* was that it would teach simple skills to the people and help them remain in villages as useful citizens and not be forced to leave for towns and cities looking for unskilled, poorly paid, and degrading jobs and be exposed to urban violence of one form or another. What was true in Gandhi's time is still relevant in today's world where we see highly formally educated people without jobs and villagers under the impact of urbanization and globalization migrating to cities in search of any odd job such as *rickshaw puller* or rag picker.

Violence against women, female infanticide or mistreatment of the girl child would definitely be reduced if our education system followed Gandhi's principles of moral values, gender equality, non-violence, truth and cultivation of right attitudes.

A right type of education would make people more self-reliant, bridge socio-economic disparities and the rural-urban divide, and generally help in the society becoming more egalitarian, harmonious, and contented. In an article in *TheHindu* newspaper Professor Krishna Kumar of Delhi University, has argued that, "The teaching of reading during early childhood – when attitudes, habits and skills acquire life-long foundations – assumes crucial significance for the efficient functioning of democracy". Professor Kumar also writes about the responsibility of the State in the area of education. In his words:

The mutation trough which utilitarian thought went during the 19th century brought forth the

recognition of a new role for the State in the need to protect children from poverty and to educate them.

These aspects about the role of education and the State's responsibility of provision of free and relevant education would help in the creation of a just social order where there is a reduction of conflict and violence caused by socio-economic and other disparities.

The present understanding of the role of education coupled with the initiatives taken by Gandhi would address the issues of inequality, injustice and discrimination that are seen in many developing countries. This would also help in preservation of our environment.

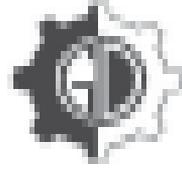
*This article originally appeared in Transcend Media Service (TMS).
www.transcend.org

The advertisement for PMC Bank features the bank's logo and name at the top left, along with its full name 'PUNJAB & MAHARASHTRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LIMITED' and 'MULTI-STATE SCHEDULED BANK'. The central theme is 'Let's embrace the change and move to PMC Bank Digital Banking', accompanied by a '24x7' icon. A tree-like diagram illustrates various digital services: 'Petrol / Diesel', 'Utility Bills', 'Grocery', 'Shopping', 'Booking Tickets', and 'Insurance Premium'. Below this, it promotes 'Mobile Banking' and 'Internet Banking' with icons of a smartphone and a laptop. A 'Debit Card' icon is also shown. A call to action states 'For Offers & Cashback Visit www.pmcbank.com'. Contact information includes 'Toll Free No : 1800 223 993' and 'E-mail : helpdesk@pmcbank.com'. The bottom section notes the bank is 'Operating from more than 120 locations across Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, Goa, Gujarat & Madhya Pradesh'. A small 'TMS Apply' logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

Postal Registration No. MCW/275/2015-2017.

License to Post without prepayment WPP License No. MR/Tech/WPP-210/West/2017

Published on Sunday, April 9, 2017 & Posted on Wednesday April 12, 2017 at Mumbai Patrika Channel, Mumbai GPO-1



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

An infrastructure company established since 1924

REGD. OFFICE :

*New Excelsior Building, (3rd Floor),
A. K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
Tel.: 022 2205 1231 Fax : 022-2205 1232*

Office : Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai & New Delhi